

Paper 7 – Pecha Kucha

From film to spatial design: contradictions and creativity

Dr Graham Cairns

Writtle School of Design, Essex.
graham.cairns@writtle.ac.uk

Abstract

This Pecha Kucha presentation will a workshop intended to introduce architects, interior designers, landscape architects and urban planners to the “visual language of film”. The underlying objective is to initiate a new way of thinking by setting up a contradiction between the medium they are using (film) and their normal practice (spatial design).

The format of the presentation will use the format of workshop as a guide. Stage 1: we will see examples of the films and filming techniques studied by the students and then pass on to the initial analytical drawings done by students. These show their attempts to understand their new media and its relation to their existing knowledge base.

Stage 2: we will see still shots taken from student films in which they have attempted to understand certain spaces through the medium of the film camera. We will underline how the camera has changed the way students tend to think about spaces when using their normal documentation tools - a pencil drawing or a photograph. We will see the first creative responses to the contradictions introduced into their thinking process.

Stage 3: we will examine the next step in the workshop process in which students create storyboards set in the spaces of their design project. Again we will see how the contradictions between the real space and the filmed image push the students into creative ideas and unexpected observations.

Finally we pass to Stage 4: we will see examples of architectural design projects in which students have used the film camera as an analytical tool and film techniques as sources of creative ideas. The results will indicate the differences between standard design solutions and those proposed by these students. We will thus show how the introduction of “alien” techniques into a pre-established thinking process results in “contradictions” that then lead to creative responses.